

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed February 6, 2007 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-12, 15, 20-32, 35-43, and 45-48 are pending in this application, with claims 1 and 27 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claim Amendments

Independent claims 1 and 27 have each been amended to recite that the system is in a motor vehicle and that the network is an optical ring network. Support for these amendments is found on page 14, lines 7-9; and page 4, line 19 of the application as originally filed. Independent claims 1 and 27 are also amended to recite that the audio/video appliances include at least two dissimilar appliances. Support for this amendment is found at page 14, lines 10-12; and Fig. 1 of the application as originally filed. Independent claims 1 and 27 are also amended to delete the limitations related to classes and subclasses. These deleted limitations are now recited in dependent claims 47 and 48, respectively.

Claims 13-14, 16, and 33 are canceled by the present amendment without prejudice or disclaimer.

Dependent claims 15, 22, and 28 are amended to be consistent with the above changes

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 4, 6, 11-15, 20, 27, 29, 31-33, and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,574,514 (Tanihira) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,574,514 (Klosterman) and U.S. Patent No. 5,973, 722 (Wakai).

Claims 2 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihara, Klosterman, and Wakai and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,623,613 (Rowe)

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,141,036 (Katayama).

Claims 7, 8, and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,751,581 (Ishiguro).

Claims 9, 10, 24, 25, and 38-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,526,581 (Edson).

Claims 21 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,232,539 (Looney).

Claims 22, 23, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of WO 99/35009 (Beckert).

Claims 26 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,157,725 (Becker).

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of EP 0 560 593 (Kawamura).

Claims 45 and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Tanihira, Klosterman, and Wakai in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,210,611 (Yee).

Independent claims 1 and 27 are allowable over the prior art of record because the prior art of record fails to disclose, teach or suggest (1) an automotive optical ring network having a plurality of nodes, and (2) a control unit storing information about the audio/video presentations transmitted by the audio/video appliances and a visual output unit “displaying the classified information about the available audio/video presentations based on the class of the information independently of the audio/video appliances”, wherein the audio/video appliances include dissimilar appliances.

Tanihara discloses an audio/video system for an automobile with a plurality of components connected to a bus 71. As acknowledged by the Examiner on page 24 of the Office Action dated August 12, 2004 (under the rejection of claims 13, 16, and 33), Tanihara fails to disclose an optical ring network. The network bus 71 of Tanihara is not a ring network. It merely includes bus sections interconnecting the equipment (see col. 5, lines 35-40 of Tanihara). The Examiner alleged in the August 12, 2004 Office Action that the recited optical ring network was disclosed by Kawamura and that it would be obvious to use the optical ring network of Kawamura in the system and method taught by Tanihara, Looney, and Wakai. However, Kawamura does not disclose an optical ring network with a plurality of nodes, as expressly recited in each of independent claims 1 and 27. In contrast, Kawamura discloses a “ring-like network” having a plurality of buses 26a, 26b, 27a, 27b, 28a, 28b, 29a, and 29b, each of the buses connected between two pieces of equipment. The signal goes through each of the pieces of equipment as described at col. 8, lines 13-25. Since Kawamura discloses that each of the components are interconnected by bus sections, the bus of Kawamura can not be considered to be an optical ring network with a plurality of nodes. Even Kawamura describes the network as “ring-like”. Accordingly, Kawamura fails to teach or suggest an optical ring network “having a plurality of nodes” for an audio/visual network in a motor vehicle, as recited in independent claims 1 and 27.

Furthermore, Tanihara teaches away from an optical ring network because most of the audio/visual equipment in the motor vehicle has an analog output and is not configured for connection to an optical ring (see, e.g., Fig. 8).

Neither Klosterman nor Wakai disclose, teach or suggest what Tanihara lacks. Klosterman discloses a merging multi-source information in a television system. However, none of the connections can be considered to be a ring network.

Wakai discloses a combined digital audio/video on demand and broadcast distribution system for distributing audio/video content to a plurality of peripherals 150, 152, 154. This can not be considered to be a ring network.

Accordingly, the combined teachings of Tanihara, Klosterman, Wakai, and Kawamura fail to disclose an automotive optical ring network having a plurality of nodes, as recited in independent claims 1 and 27.

The Examiner relies on Wakai for the teaching of providing information about available audio/video presentation independent of the appliances, as recited in the independent claims. However, none of the prior art discloses a control unit storing classified information transmitted from dissimilar elements or displaying the classified information. Wakai teaches an in-flight entertainment system in which passengers in an airplane access audio/visual presentations at individual terminals. As described at col. 5, lines 52-58 of Wakai, each of a plurality of media servers 106, 108 includes hard disk drives and stores video on demand and audio on demand. The number of media servers present depends on the storage volume and the number of simultaneous streams supported by the system. Accordingly, the in-flight system of Wakai stores all the audio/video presentations on media servers 106, 108 which act as one large data storage. Since each of the media servers 106, 108 of Wakai are hard disk drives, Wakai does not include at least two dissimilar audio/video appliances connected to a motor vehicle optical ring network.

In general, those skilled in that art of automotive audio/visual systems do not have to take into account the possibility of streaming a plurality of presentations to a plurality of terminals. In contrast to the in-flight system, an automotive audio/video system includes various dissimilar appliances such as a radio, cassette player, CD player, and TV tuner. Thus, one skilled in the art of automotive audio/video systems would not look to an in-flight system such as the one disclosed in

Wakai for information regarding the interconnection of dissimilar elements of the automotive audio/video system. Even if the teachings of Wakai are combined with those of Tanihara and Klosterman, the combined teachings of these references still fail to teach or suggest the claimed subject matter. Wakai discloses only that a data storage can have many units of storage, i.e., the multiple hard disk drives in the media servers, as required for storage and support of simultaneous streams. Wakai does not teach or suggest the claimed dissimilar types of media storage appliances as are present in an automotive audio/video system. Accordingly, Wakai fails to teach or suggest “displaying the classified information about the available audio/video presentations based on the class of the information independently of the audio/video appliances”, wherein the audio/video appliances include dissimilar appliances, as now recited in independent claims 1 and 27.


In view of all the above amendments and remarks, independent claims 1 and 27 are deemed to be allowable over Tanihara, Klosterman, Wakai, and Kawamura.

Dependent claims 2-12, 15, 20-26, 28-32, 35-43, and 45-48 are deemed to be allowable for at least the same reasons as are independent claims 1 and 27, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: May 7, 2007